

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 25, 2001

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, on Rollcall No. 87, 1 was unavoidably detained on official business. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay."

TRIBUTE TO THE FINLANDIA UNIVERSITY LIONS FOR THEIR NSCAA BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. BART STUPAK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 25, 2001

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say a few words about a great accomplishment by a small university in my congressional district—one of the nation's newest universities, as a matter of fact.

Finlandia University in Hancock, Michigan, up on the beautiful Keweenaw Peninsula, is

less than a year old. That age is deceiving, however. Finlandia is actually a new name for Soumi College, a school founded by Finnish immigrants in 1896 to ensure their children would have a better life through advanced education.

One of the qualities of Finnish culture is a respect for the quality of "sisu," translated variously as persistence, determination, drive, or stamina. The Finlandia Lions, the university's basketball team, recently demonstrated the characteristic of sisu by capturing the National Small College Athletic Association national championship in basketball.

The team entered the tourney with a 14–14 record and came up in the first round against St. Mary's College of Ave Maria University, an Orchard Lake, Mich., school. After defeating St. Mary's by a score of 76–50, Finlandia University next faced the tournament's No. 1 seed, Northwest Christian College from Eugene, Ore. In a comeback victory, 69–66, Finlandia won the right to meet Southern Virginia College of Buena Vista, Va., which it defeated 98–84 to take the title.

The Finlandia Lions basketball team was led by second-year coach Art Van Damme and assistant coach Duane Snell. Nine Michigan students and one student from Finland make up the roster of the National Small College

Athletic Association championship team. Team members are Nick Forgette and Jacob Polfus of Carney; Jeffrey Stiefel of Capac; Jeremy Suardina of Gwinn; John Abramson, Painesdale; Mark Nolan, Watton; Jon Paul Katona, Negaunee; Pete Flaska, Ishpeming; Bill Loeks, Iron Mountain; and Marcus Ylaineen of Helsinki, Finland.

Mr. Speaker, Finlandia University is the only private university in Michigan's Upper Peninsula and one of only 28 colleges and universities in the U.S. affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. In its vision statement, Finlandia University says it is "committed to offering liberal arts based, globally connected, international, ecologically sensitive, spiritually engaged and career focused baccalaureate and associate degree programs as well as community education opportunities."

Clearly, Mr. Speaker, Finlandia is also offering its students an opportunity to cheer for one heck of a basketball team. I ask you and my House colleagues to join me in offering the warmest congratulations to Coach Van Damme and the Finlandia Lions for their success in capturing the NSCAA basketball crown.